

February 3, 2006

## USAID/CAR Bi-weekly Report

### Kazakhstan Reduces Registration Fees for Legal Entities

Effective January 1, 2006, the Government of Kazakhstan reduced the state registration fees for all legal entities, including NGOs (for which the registration fee was decreased from \$146 to \$57). This development crowns two years of successful advocacy, led by the USAID-supported International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL). The center works in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries to improve the legal environment for NGOs. In 2004-2005, ICNL addressed the issue of registration fees through technical assistance and publications, as well as during conferences and workshops, including the high-level Central Asia Regional Conference on Legal Regulation of the Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly.

Reduced registration fees will enable more interested individuals and groups to establish non-commercial entities, thus contributing to the strengthening of Kazakhstan's civil society sector. The change follows another significant step made by the Kazakh Government in 2005, when it ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. With USAID's support, ICNL had actively worked with NGOs and citizens to explain the importance of the ratification of the covenant in contributing to a more vibrant civil society sector.

### Kyrgyzstan

#### Migrant Registration Reduces Risk of Trafficking in Persons

Eighty-two community members have registered as labor migrants and have received work permits, as a result of a six-month project implemented with USAID's assistance by the Nookat Civil Society Support Center (NCSSC). The project was born after USAID's Participant Training Program, implemented by the Academy for Educational Development, arranged a study tour to Ukraine for the NCSSC director. The tour focused on trafficking in persons and prompted the NCSSC director to implement a project providing legal assistance to migrant workers from Nookat City. The project was funded jointly by USAID's Trafficking in Persons Project, implemented by Winrock International, and the NCSSC. The Center carried out public outreach campaigns to inform communities about the rights of migrant workers, and provided consultations to community members about official registration requirements in Russia and Kazakhstan.



*After participating in USAID's study tour, the NCSSC director initiated a six-month project to assist migrant workers.*

*Photo: AED*

#### Kyrgyz Government Reduces Business and Trade Barriers

To further align its policies with WTO requirements, the Government of Kyrgyzstan has recently approved several decrees that will eliminate barriers and promote trade and business development, while reducing corruption and bureaucracy. One of the decrees states that government agencies may issue only recommendations, not mandatory acts, in the area of technical regulation, including requirements for products, processes, standards, public surveillance, control, certification, assessment, and accreditation. Another decree contains a list of products subject to mandatory certification. This list reduces the number of products subject to regulation (testing, inspection, and certification) by more than 50%.

USAID supports the Kyrgyz Government's efforts to comply with WTO requirements through its Trade Facilitation and Investment Project, implemented by Pragma. The USAID project assists in introducing changes in the legislation and drafting of new laws and regulations, and supports implementation of these laws by facilitating Government discussions with representatives of various non-governmental sectors.

### **Kyrgyzstan Allows for Public Access to Real Estate Information**

On December 26, the Kyrgyz Government adopted law amendments that provide public access to information on registered rights to immovable property. Four USAID projects contributed to and participated in implementation of the real estate regulatory changes: the Commercial Law Project (implemented by ARD/CHECCHI), Local Government Initiative (implemented by Urban Institute), Investment Roundtable, and Land Reform Project (implemented by Chemonics). These projects provided assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan in drafting the amendments, facilitated a study tour to the Czech Republic, and supported several roundtable discussions among real estate brokers, parliamentarians, and Real Estate State Registry officials.

The newly adopted changes to the law ensure access for potential buyers to information about registered rights, transactions, and claims to a particular unit of a real estate. Additionally, the new amendments will increase the transparency of real estate transactions and, in conjunction with the law on income declaration by high ranking civil servants, will help to reduce corruption among government officials.

### **Tajikistan**

#### **USAID Assists Tajikistan in Receiving GFATM Grant to Prevent and Treat Malaria**

Tajikistan recently received approval for a five-year \$5.4 million grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM), to prevent and treat malaria. USAID, a participant on the Country Coordination Mechanism, has been working on malaria control in Tajikistan since 1998, and funds the World Health Organization's Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Program in the region. RBM provided much of the technical expertise for preparing the application, and USAID coordinated with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to have a U.S.-based expert provide input to strengthen the application. USAID staff also facilitated communication between all involved parties, to ensure prompt responses to questions posed by the GFATM during the review process. The approval of this grant application represents an important step for infectious disease control in Tajikistan, as technical assistance provided by USAID will be utilized by the Government of Tajikistan to implement full-scale programs with funding from the GFATM.

#### **Rehabilitated Water Pump Reduces Tension Among Communities in Panjakent District**

In a remote and isolated region of Tajikistan, USAID's Peaceful Communities Initiative Project (PCI) helped end a decades-long dispute over water between two communities in Jamoat Hurmi in Panjakent District. The project, implemented by Mercy Corps, rehabilitated a water pump, which has not worked in the 15 years since Tajikistan's independence. The pump had caused continuous tension between the ethnic Turk minority community in the village of Shingak and the neighboring village of Garibak. PCI renovated the pump and the station house, and laid new pipes that will irrigate at least 75 hectares of land. Apart from improving relations between the two neighbor communities, the project will bring economic benefits and reduce labor migration from the Jamoat. PCI will follow up with training for the community on maintenance, sustainability, and principles of sharing water.



*Access to water is one of the several issues tackled by USAID's Peaceful Communities Initiative to reduce tension among communities.*

*Photo: Mercy Corps*

### **Six Hundred Families in Tavildara Receive Access to Electricity**

The USAID Conflict Prevention Project, implemented by Mercy Corps, has recently handed over two transformers to the local government in the villages of Zuvay and Shakob in mountainous Tavildara District. The handover ceremonies were attended by members of the communities, representatives of the District Power Supply Department, local government officials, Mercy Corps staff, and Mullahs, who gave their blessings over the event and the project. The transformers, with a capacity of 250 kW and 400 kW, provide electricity to a total of 600 residents of the two villages. To ensure maintenance and management of the transformers, the USAID project also provided assistance to the local energy user committee. In collaboration with the District Power Supply Department, these committees are responsible for collecting fees from the users and the maintenance and repair of the transformers.

### **Turkmenistan**

#### **USAID Provides Reagents for TB Treatment Program**

In January, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Project HOPE, implementers of USAID's Tuberculosis (TB) prevention project, provided much-needed reagents for TB diagnostics laboratories at USAID's TB-DOTS pilot sites in Ashgabat, Turkmenbashi, Dushak, and Mary. Successful implementation of TB-DOTS treatment requires an adequate level of laboratory diagnostic and treatment control. Unfortunately, at the end of 2005, Turkmenistan failed to ensure necessary quantities of laboratory reagents, which threatened the entire TB-DOTS program. Under these critical conditions, USAID stepped in to provide the Turkmen Government with reagents that will result in continuous provision of early diagnostics and treatment of new TB cases.



*Successful TB treatment requires an adequate level of laboratory diagnostic and treatment control.*

*Photo: USAID archives*

The TB incidence rate in Turkmenistan is rather high, with 105 cases per 100,000 people. Since 1999, USAID's TB prevention projects focused on four TB treatment pilots, where USAID provided equipment, medicines, and training for health professionals and laboratory staff. Due to the successes of the TB treatment at the USAID-supported pilots, the Government of Turkmenistan in 2005 approved the National TB DOTS program, which includes country-wide expansion of the TB DOTS treatment.

#### **Workshop Highlights Private Sector and Government of Turkmenistan's Interest in Legal Education**

USAID's implementing partner ABA/CEELI, in collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development, which implements USAID's Participant Training Program, and the local NGO Bosporus, organized a roundtable to discuss the development of legal clinics on January 20. The discussion was attended by representatives from the Government Prosecutor's Office, the Institute of Democracy, Turkmen State University, and the donor community. Participants heard a presentation by a visiting ABA/CEELI expert on the experience of other countries in developing legal clinics, notably Russia, and agreed that access to quality legal education is greatly needed in Turkmenistan.

This is the second recent event focused on issues related to NGOs to receive Government of Turkmenistan's support. In late December 2005, USAID's implementing partners, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law and the Academy for Educational Development, held two successful workshops on NGO taxation and NGO law.